Sherlock Holmes had listened with the utmost intentness to the statemust appeal so directly to his love of the complex and the unusual drew out his note-book and jotted down one or two memoranda

Tou have been very remiss in not coming to me sooner," said he Tou start me on my investigation with a very serious handican

onceivable, for example, that is try and this lawn would have nothing to an expert observer.

I am not to blame, Mr. Holmes. ce was extremely desirous to all public scandal. He was of his family unhappiness bens dragged before the world. He has a drep horror of anything of the

"But there has been some official

"Yes, sir, and it has proved most oting. An apparent clue was case obtained, since a boy and a man were reported to have con leaving a neighboring stay an early train. Only last we had news that the couple hunted down in Liverpool, they prove to have no connection with the matter in hand. hen it was that in my despair and ntment after a sleepless the I came straight to you by the

"I suppose the local investigation was relaxed while this false clue was ing followed up?"

"It was entirely dropped." to that three days have been The affair has been most dehandled."

I feel it and admit it." yet the problem should be of ultimate solution. I shall happy to look into it. Have able to trace any connection the missing boy and this

at all." he in the master's class?"

he never exchanged a word with him, so far as I know." t is certainly very singular. Had the boy a bicycle?"

at certain?"

pon a bicycle in the dead of night bearing the boy in his arms?"

The bicycle must have been a blind. It may have been hidden somee and the pair gone off on foot."

"Quite so; but it seems rather an absurd blind, does it not? Were there devotes in this shed?"

ruid he not have hidden a couple had he desired to give the idea that had gone off upon them?"

ppose he would.'

course he would. The blind theory won't do. But the incident is an starting point for an investigation. After all, a bicycle is not an to conceal or to destroy. One other question. Did any one call day before."

he get any letters?"

on open the boys' letters?"

do you know it was from the father?"

coat of arms was on the envelope and it was addressed in the

billiar stiff hand. Besides, the Duke remembers having written." n had he a letter before that?"

for several days." d he ever one from France?"

on see the point of my questions, of course? Either the boy was off by force or he went of his own free will. In the latter case you ect that some prompting from outside would be needed to make so a lad do such a thing. If he has had no visitors, that prompting must habit of posting letters and in letters; hence, I try to find out who were his correspondents." himself," said he. "This fear I cannot help you much. His only correspondent, so far as I letter was laid with the was his own father."

wrote to him on the very day of his disappearance? Were the ble, and I myself put them between father and son very friendly?"

Grace is never very friendly with any one. He is completely "You are sure this one in large public questions and is rather inaccessible to all ordinary was among them?" But he was always kind to the boy in his own way."

the sympathies of the latter were with the mother?"

The Duke, then?"

Heavens, no!

Then how could you know?" I have had some confidential talks with Mr. James Wilder, His Grace's ry. It was he who gave me the information about Lord Saltire's

"I see. By the way, that last letter of the Duke's-was it found in the y's room after he was gone?"

'No; he had taken it with him. I think, Mr. Holmes, it is time that we ere leaving for Euston."

"I will order a four-wheeler. In a quarter of an hour we shall be at ir service. If you are telegraphing home Mr. Huxtable, it would be well allow the people in your neighborhood to imagine that the inquiry is still ng on in Liverpool, or wherever else that red herring led your pack. In mean time I will do a little quiet work at your own doors, and perhaps
I have already said seent is not so cold but that two old hounds like Watson and myself that I do not bemy get a sniff of it."

That evening found us in the cold, bracing atmosphere of the Peak Duchess would encourage so monstrous an action; but the lad had the most gypsies. Look here, Watson! There is a watercourse across the moor. You alspered something to his master, who turned to us with agitation in every to the Hall.

Tr. Come, gentlemen, and I will introduce you."

stately person, scrupulously dressed, with a drawn, thin face and a nose light into the discreetly shadowed corners of his ducal history. ch was grotesquely curved and long. His complexion was of a dead which was more startling by contrast with a long, dwindling beard of at once with characteristic eagerness into the investigation. gred, which flowed down over his white waistcoat, with his watch chain

e; but nothing had been heard of him. The Duke is greatly agi- gleaming through its fringe. Such was the stately presence who looked ston- absolute conviction that it was only through the window that he could have and, as to me, you have seen yourselves the state of nervous prostra- ily at us from the centre of Dr. Huxtable's hearthrug. Beside him stood a escaped. The German master's room and effects gave no further clue. In master workman who sees his work lie ready before him. A very different which the suspense and the responsibility have reduced me. Mr. very young man, whom I understood to be Wilder, the private secretary. He his case a trailer of ivy had given way under his weight, and we saw by the Holmes, this active, alert man, from the introspective and pallid dreamer If ever you put forward your full powers, I implore you to do so was small, nervous, alert, with intelligent light-blue eyes and mobile fea- light of a igntern the mark on the lawn where his heels had come down. of Baker street. I felt, as I looked upon that supple figure, alive with nervnever in your life could you have a case which is more worthy tures. It was he who at once, in an incisive and positive tone, opened the That one dint in the short, green grass was the only material witness left ous energy, that it was indeed a strenuous day that awaited us. conversation

"I called this morning, Dr. Huxtable, too late to prevent you from startof the unhappy schoolmaster. His drawn brows and the deep furrow ing for London. I learned that your object was to invite Mr. Sherlock had obtained a large ordnance map of the neighborhood; and this he paths, until we came to the broad, light-green belt which marked the morass them showed that he needed no exhortation to concentrate all his Holmes to undertake the conduct of this case. His Grace is surprised, Dr. brought into my room, where he laid it out on the bed, and, having balanced between us and Holdernesse. Certainly, if the lad had gone homeward he

> When I learned that the police had failed"----"His Grace is by no means convinced that the police have failed."

"But surely, Mr. Wilder"----

ious to avoid all public scandal. He with our investigation, prefers to take as few people as pos-

sible into his confidence." died," said the brow-beaten doctor: that there is no side road for a mile "Mr. She Nock Holmes can return to either way. If these two folk passed

London by the morning train." "Hardly that, doctor, hardly that," "Exactly." said Holmes, in his blandest voice. "By a singular and happy chance, "This northern air is invigorating we are able to some extent to check and pleasant, so I propose to spend a what passed along this road during few days upon your moors and to oc- the night in question. At this point, cupy my mind as best I may. Wheth- where my pipe is now resting, a er I have the shelter of your roof or country constable was on duty from of the village inn is, of course, for twelve to six. It is, as you perceive. you to decide."

doctor was in the last stage of inde- absent from his post for an instant. cision, from which he was rescued and he is positive that neither boy by the deep, sonorous voice of the nor man could have gone that way red-bearded Duke, which boomed out liceman to-night, and he appears to

absurd that we should not avail our- not arrive until morning, being ab-

poses of my investigation I think one passed. If their evidence is good that it would be wiser for me to re- then we are fortunate enough to be main at the scene of the mystery." able to block the west, and also to be

Any information which Mr. Wilder or I can give you is, of course, at your disposal."

"I cannot imagine how I came to be so weak."

The great Minister showed perceptible hesitation.

"I do not think so," he said, at last.

napped for the purpose of levying ransom. You have not had any demand are the only inhabitants until you come to the Chesterfield high road. There explored." of that sort?"

"No, sir."

"One more question, Your Grace. I understand that you wrote to your son upon the day when this incident occurred."

"No; I wrote upon the

Exactly. But he received it on that day?" "Yes."

"Was there anything in your letter which might have unbalanced him or induced him to take such a step?"

"No sir; certainly not." "Did you post that letter yourself?"

The nobleman's reply was interrupted by his secretary, who broke in with

"His Grace is not in the others upon the study tain the postbag."

"Yes; I observed it." "How many letters did Your Grace write that day?"

"Twenty or thirty. I have a large ... correspondence. But surely this is somewhat irrele-

"Not entirely."

said Holmes. part." the Duke continued, "I have advised the police to turn their attention to the lieve that the



The Duke and His Secretary.

in which Dr. Huxtable's famous school is situated. It was already wrong-headed opinions, and it is possible that he may have fled to her, aided see it marked here in the map. In some parts it widens into a morass. The when we reached it. A card was lying on the hall table, and the butler and abetted by this German. I think, Dr. Huxtable, that we will now return This is particularly so in the region between Holdernesse Hall and the

Dake is here," said he. "The Duke and Mr. Wilder are in the wished to put; but the nobleman's abrupt manner showed that the inter- you early to-morrow morning, and you and I will try if we can throw some view was at an end. It was evident that to his intensely aristocratic nature little light upon the mystery." I was, of course, familiar with the pictures of the famous statesman; but this discussion of his intimate family affairs with a stranger was most The day was just breaking when I woke to find the long, thin form of

When the nobleman and his secretary had left, my friend flung himself

of this inexplicable nocturnal flight.

"You are well aware, Dr. Huxtable, that His Grace is particularly anx- you to realize those geological features which may have a good deal to do some miles down, cows had left their tracks. Nothing more.

"The matter can be easily reme- west past the school, and you see also

away by road, it was this road."

the first crossroad on the east side. I could see that the unfortunate This man declares that he was not like a dinner gong.
"I agree with Mr. Wilder, Dr. Huxme to be a perfectly reliable person. table, that you would have done That blocks this end. We have now wisely to consult me. But since Mr. to deal with the other. There is an Holmes has already been taken into of which was ill. She had sent to your confidence, it would indeed be Mackleton for a doctor, but he did selves of his services. Far from go- sent at another case. The people at ing to the inn, Mr. Holmes, I should the inn were afert all night, awaiting be pleased if you would come and his coming, and one or other of them stay with me at Holdernesse Hall." seems to have continually had an eye "I thank Your Grace. For the pur- upon the road. They declare that no

"Just as you like, Mr. Holmes, able to say that the fugitives did not use the road at all." "But the bicycle?" I objected.

"Quite so. We will come to the bicycle presently. To continue our reasoning: if these people did not go by the road, they must have traversed the "It will probably be necessary for me to see you at the Hall," said country to the north of the house or to the south of the house. That "It will probably be necessary for me to see the control of the south of the one against the other. On the south of the once again, was the mark of the bicycle, though nearly obliterated by the planation in your own mind as to the mysterious disappearance of your house is, as you perceive, a large district of arable land cut up into small hoofs of cows. After that there was no sign, but the path ran right on fields, with stone walls between them. There, I admit that a bicycle is into Ragged Shaw, the wood which backed on to the school. From this impossible. We can dismiss the idea. We turn to the country on the north. wood the cycle must have emerged. Holmes sat down on a boulder and "Excuse me if I allude to that which is painful to you, but I have no al- Here there lies a grove of trees, marked as the 'Ragged Shaw,' and on the Il, now, you do not mean to seriously suggest that this German rode ternative. Do you think that the Duchess had anything to do with the farther side stretches a great rolling moor, Lower Gill Moor, extending for ten miles and sloping gradually upward. Here, at one side of this wilderness, is Holdernesse Hall ten miles by road, but only six across the moor. tacks. A criminal who was capable of such a thought is a man whom i It is a peculiarly desolate plain. A few moor farmers have small holdings, should be proud to do business with. We will leave this question under-"The other most obvious explanation is that the child has been kid- where they rear sheep and cattle. Except these the plover and the curiew cided and hark back to our morass again for we have left a good deal unis a church there, you see, a few cottages and an inn. Beyond that the hills become precipitous. Surely it is here to the north that our quest must lie."

"But the bicycle?" I per-

"Well, well!" said Holmes impatiently. "A good cyclist does not need a high road. The moor is intersected with the full. Halloa! what is this?"

There was an agitated knock at the door, and an instant afterward Dr. Huxtable was in the room. In his hand he held a blue chevron on the peak. "At last we have a clue!"

he cried. "Thank Heaven! at last we are on the dear boy's track! It is his cap." "Where was it found?" "In the van of the gypsies

I perceived that the yellow blossoms were all dabbled with crimson. On who camped on the moor. They left on Tuesday. Today the police traced them down and examined their caravan. This was found." "How do they account for well as the track to guide us, he cannot escape us now."

"They shuffled and lied-

that they know." "So far so good," man master.

said Holmes, when "It at least bears out the theory that The police have really done nothing locally, save

school It is vain to look elsewhere for tracks in this dry weather; but at I could see that there were other questions which Holmes would have that point there is certainly a chance of some record being left. I will call

himself was very different from his representation. He was a tall abhorrent, and that he feared lest every fresh question would throw a flereer. Holmes by my badside. He was fully dressed and had apparently already

"I have done the lawn and the bicycle shed," said he. "I have also had a ramble through the Ragged Shaw. Now, Watson, there is cocoa ready in The boy's chamber was carefully examined and yielded nothing save the the next room. I must beg you to hurry, for we have a great day before us."

His eyes shone and his cheeks were flushed with the exhibaration of th

And yet it opened in the blackest disappointment. With high hopes we Sherlock Holmes left the house alone and only returned after 11. He struck across the peaty, russet moor, intersected with a thousand sheep them showed that he rected no exhortestor to content at the law had gone nomeward ne the lamp in the middle of it, he began to smoke over it and occasionally to must have passed this, and he could not pass it without leaving his traces. point out objects of interest with the reeking amber of his pipe. But no sign of him or the German could be seen. With a darkening face my "This case grows upon me, Watson," said he. "There are decidedly friend strode along the margin, eagerly observant of every muddy stain upon some points of interest in connection with it. In this early stage I want the mossy surface. Sheep-marks there were in profusion, and at one place,

"Check number one," said Holmes, looking gloomily over the rolling "Look at this map. This dark square is the priory school. I'll put a expanse of the moor. "There is another morass down yonder and a narrow pin in it. Now, this line is the main road. You see that it runs east and neck between. Halloa! halloa! what have we here?"

We had come on a small black ribbon of pathway. In the middle of 't. clearly marked on the sodden soil, was the track of a bicycle.

"Hurrah!" I cried. "We have it." But Holmes was shaking his head, and his face was puzzled and expectant rather than joyous. "A bicycle, certainly; but not the

bicycle," said he. "I am familiar with forty-two different impressions left by tires. This, as you perceive, is a Dunlop, with a patch upon the outer cover. Heidegger's tires were Palmer's, leaving longitudinal stripes. Aveling, the mathematical master, was sure upon the point. Therefore, it is not Heidegger's track."

"The boy's, then?"

"Possibly, if we could prove a hicycle to have been in his possession. But this we have utterly failed to do. This track, as you perceive, was made by a rider who was going from the direction of the school."

"Or towards it?"

"No, no, my dear Watson. The more deeply sunk impression is, of course, the hind wheel, upon which the weight rests. You perceive several places where it has passed across and obliterated the more shallow mark of the front one. It was un-

doubtedly heading away from the school. It may or may not be connected with our inquiry, but we will follow it backward before we go any farther."

We did so, and at the end of a few hundred yards lost the tracks as we emerged from the hoggy portion of the moor. Following the path backrested his chin in his hands. I had smoked two cigarettes before he moved.

"Well, well," said he at last. "It is, of course, possible that a cunning man might change the tire of his bicycle in order to leave unfamiliar

We continued our systematic survey of the edge of the sodden portion of the moor, and soon our perseverance was gloriously rewarded. Right across the lower part of the bog lay a miry path. Holmes gave a cry of delight as he approached it. An impression like a fine bundle of telegraph wires ran down the centre of it. It was the Palmer tire.

"Here is Herr Heidegger, sure enough!" cried Holmes, exultantly. "My reasoning seems to have been pretty sound, Watson."

"I congratulate you."

Bighting Cock Ja

RACCCO SHAU .

PRIORY SCHOOL.

Holmes's Map of the Scene.

Coolsed Country

"But we have a long way still to go. Kindly walk clear of the path. Now let us follow the trail. I fear that it will not lead very far."

We found, however, as we advanced that this portion of the moor is intersected with soft patches, and, though we frequently lost sight of the track, we always succeeded in picking it up once more. "Do you observe," said Holmes, "that the rider is now undoubtedly

forcing the pace? There can be no doubt of it. Look at this impression, cricket cap, with a white where you get both tires clear. The one is as deep as the other. That can only mean that the rider is throwing his weight onto the handle-bar, as a man does when he is sprinting. By Jove! he has had a fall." There was a broad, irregular smudge covering some yards of the track

Then there were a few footmarks, and the tire reappeared once more. "A side slip," I suggested. Holmes held up a crumpled branch of flowering gorse. To my horror

the path, too, and among the heather were dark stains of clotted blood. "Bad!" said Holmes. "Bad! Stan clear, Watson! Not an unnecessary footstep! What do I read here? He fell wounded-he stood up-he remounted-he proceeded. But there is no other track. Cattle on this side path. He was surely not gored by a bull? Impossible! But I see no traces of anyone else. We must push on, Watson. Surely, with stains as

Our search was not a very long one. The tracks of the tire began to said that they found it on curve fantastically upon the wet and shining path. Suddenly, as I looked the moor on Tuesday morn- ahead, the gleam of metal caught my eye from amid the thick gorse bushes. ing. They know where he Out of them we dragged a bicycle, Palmer-tired, one pedal bent, and the is, the rascals! Thank good- whole front of it horribly smeared and slobbered with blood. On the other ness, they are all safe under side of the bushes a shoe was projecting. We ran around, and there lay lock and key. Either the the unfortunate rider. He was a tall man, full-bearded, with spectacles. fear of the law or one glass of which had been knocked out. The cause of his death was a the Duke's purse frightful blow upon the head, which had crushed in part of his skull. That will certainly get he could have gone on after receiving such an injury said much for the out of them all vitality and courage of the man. He wore shoes, but no socks, and his open coat disclosed a night shirt beneath it. It was undoubtedly the Ger-

Holmes turned the body over reverently and examined it with great the doctor had at attention. He then sat in deep thought for a time, and I could see by his last left the room. ruffled brow that this grim discovery had not, in his opinion, advanced us much in our inquiry.

"It is a little difficult to know what to do, Watson," said he, at last. it is on the side of "My inclinations are to push this inquiry on, for we have already lost so the Lower Gill much time that we cannot afford to waste another hour. On the other Moor that we must hand, we are bound to inform the police of the discovery, and to see that this poor fellow's body is looked after."

"I could take a note back."

"But I need your company and assistance. Wait a bit! There is a fellow cutting peat up yonder. Bring him over here and he will guide the

I brought the peasant across and Holmes despatched the frightened man with a note to Dr. Huxtable.

"Now, Watson," said he, "we have picked up two clues this morning. One is the bicycle with the Falmer tire, and we see what that has led to. The other is the bicycle with the patched Dunlop. Before we start to investigate that, let us try to realize what we do know, so as to make the most of it, and to separate the essential from the accidental.

"First of all, I wish to impress upon you that the boy certainly left of his own free will. He got down from his window and he went off, either alone or with some one. That is sure."

"Well, now, let us turn to this unfortunate German master. The boy